Rugby, Dec. 20, 1876.

Dear Fanny:

Your letter of Monday evening was duly received, enclosing the one from Oswald to his grandfather. Blessings on the little fellow! Tell him that though I cannot read all that he has written, I am sure it means that he wishes to give me a great deal of pleasure, as he has done by sending it. Well, give him pencil and paper, and let him keep trying to do his best, and one of these days he may write better than his grandpapa.

It is certainly a relief to learn that Harold's ear is nearly well. He has been a real sufferer, and a very good, patient little boy.

It is equally pleasant to be assured that my darling Helen is no longer pale and without appetite, but rosy

and in good bodily condition. I keep a warm place for her in my heart.

That awful scourge, diphtheria, appears to be an epidemic in New York. May you all be safely preserved against it. I do not know how much risk, if any, the children will run in going to school; but do not let them expose themselves to the severity of winter rashly.

Monday morning, Miss Southwick was obliged to go to Portland on a contested Will case of her aunt Morrill. She has not yet returned, but may get here to-night or to-morrow. The weather has been very cold and stormy since she went away. We have now good sleighing, and winter is here in earnest.

I shall send to-morrow, by express, Harry's fur coat and travelling rug. It will doubtless reach him on Friday.

Frank took no cold in attending Horace Cheney's funeral at Valley Falls, though the weather was extremely sharp

and blustering. Afterward, Frank went to Providence, took tea at Charlotte's, then spent an hour with all three of the Randalls at Miss Waterman's, called upon Dr. and Mrs. Dow, and returned home the same night.

On Monday I received a very kind and sympathetic letter from Collector Simmons, informing me that, much to his regret, he should be obliged immediately to discharge our venerable and beloved friend R. J. Wallcut, in consequence of imperative orders from the Secretary of the Treasury to dismiss every employé not absolutely indispensable to the transaction of business. He had no alternative. The blow has come suddenly, and at the hardest season of the year. It is not at all probable that any other situation can be found as a substitute, even for much less pay. We are all feeling very sad about the case. How must our dear old friend feel!

Ellen Fisher has sent a postal card to Frank, inquiring whether you are coming to spend Christmas with us; and, if not, asking how a letter to you should be directed. I have given her the needed information.

I attended, with Ellie, Essipoff's matinee and farewell. Lizzie Simmons and Mary Wells Crane were also present. They did not sit with us, and I know not how they were pleased. Of course, the playing was admirable, and the attendance (in spite of a pouring, blow day) much larger than any audience we saw in Steinway Hall.

Mrs. Joy, Miss Thurber, and Mr. Wallcut took tea here Sunday evening.

This evening Frank and I are invited to take tea at William's, with Mr. and Mrs. Swasey.

I pity you on account of the pain your teeth are giving you.

A safe and quick voyage for Harry's steamer! Your loving Father.